

RADIO TV REPORTS, INC.

4701 WILLARD AVENUE, CHEVY CHASE, MARYLAND 20815 656-4068

FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM Good Morning America STATION WJLA-TV
ABC Network

DATE April 14, 1983 7:11 AM CITY Washington, DC

SUBJECT Interview: Thomas Enders

DAVID HARTMAN: Earlier this week, a group in Congress challenged President Reagan's policies toward Latin America.

They voted to limit United States aid to the government of El Salvador, and to largely prohibit U.S. aid to the rebels in Nicaragua. Now this brings us back to some very fundamental questions about the amount of support and the kind of support that we should be offering in Latin America.

In a few minutes, we'll talk with a Congressman who opposes President Reagan's policies. But earlier this morning, I talked with Tom Enders, Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America Affairs. He was in Washington with Steve Bell.

The fact-finding commission which is back from Nicaragua yesterday charged, that, quote -- I'm quoting them -- "The U.S. is deeply involved in covert activities aimed at the overthrow of the Nicaraguan government, and that this activity violates the OAS Charter and the Boland Amendment, which prohibits the spending of U.S. money aimed at overthrowing the Nicaraguan government."

How do you respond to that kind of charge and, specifically, those charges?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS S. ENDERS: Well, we don't discuss -- this administration or any previous administration

OFFICES IN: WASHINGTON D.C. • NEW YORK • LOS ANGELES • CHICAGO • DETROIT • AND OTHER PRINCIPAL CITIES

Material supplied by Radio TV Reports, Inc. may be used for file and reference purposes only. It may not be reproduced, sold or publicly demonstrated or exhibited.

don't discuss intelligence matters, allegations of covert activities in public. We do discuss them with the relevant congressional committees. There's one in the House side and one in the Senate side, and we are now in the process of renewed discussion with both those regarding the alleged activities.

You've heard a statement on the Senate side that the American law is not being violated, and there will be further hearings on the House side.

HARTMAN: Mr. Enders, just how concerned are you, however, this morning to have to sit here and answer these questions about public questions being asked of this nature?

ENDERS: Well, inevitably, the process is denatured to the degree that matters of this intelligence kind become public. I think everybody would prefer that they not become public, and that's why we have these committees. So we have a means of cooperation between the administration and the Congress. We'd like to keep the integrity of that process.

STEVE BELL: In fact, what you have is a congressional prohibition on spending money to aid the rebels that are trying to overthrow the government of Nicaragua.

ENDERS: No, I think what we have is a congressional -- and there was a debate in both the House and the Senate about it. What we have is a congressional prohibition from aiding or engaging in activities which would result in -- which -- for the purpose of overthrowing the Nicaraguan government or provoking a war with one of its neighbors, Honduras. That's very clear, and we're respecting the law.

Now the law does not say that you can't engage in activities or support which would interdict supplies going into El Salvador to help the insurgents there, or which would result -- for the purpose of bringing the Nicaraguan government to the peace table to talk about how we quiet this whole situation down.

BELL: But in fact we have rebels trying to overthrow the government of Nicaragua. What is the attitude of the Reagan Administration toward those rebels?

ENDERS: Well, we think it's inevitable after the kind of pressures that the Nicaraguan government has put on its own people, intimidating, or attempting to intimidate the church, repressing the free press, taking over the unions and the radio stations, and practically eliminating the private sector. We think it's inevitable that people take arms against their own government in this case. And, in fact, it appears that the

opposition -- armed opposition now as well as silent opposition is spreading..

BELL: Do we support them?

ENDERS: Well, it's up to them to -- to decide who's going to be -- up to the Nicaraguans to decide who's going to govern Nicaragua. That's for them to decide, not for us to decide.

HARTMAN: Specifically, what's our goal in Nicaragua, Mr. Enders?

ENDERS: Well, what we'd like to do is to get them to back out of support for the insurgents in El Salvador because that's a big part of the problem in El Salvador, and we'd like to get them to go back to their original commitments to pluralism of democracy that have been systematically violated.

You know, if Nicaragua were to do both of those things, we could get all the foreign advisers and military trainers out of Central America -- ours and the 2,000 Cubans that are in Nicaragua, and all those East Germans and Palestinians. Get them all out so that the whole area would get out of the East-West conflict.

HARTMAN: Mr. Enders, what do you think will happen in Central America if our policies are not effective at deterring what the Administration calls a "Soviet" and/or "Cuban threat" down there?

ENDERS: Well, you've got one Marxist-Leninist government now in Nicaragua, and, in fact, if we take action such that that government can go on helping the insurgents in El Salvador there will be another one, and then our anxiety levels will rise because Marxist-Leninism will spread toward the Canal 300 miles away from Nicaragua, and toward the southern Mexican border 300 miles away from Nicaragua.

BELL: The domino theory.

ENDERS: So you get your anxiety levels going up, the problem won't go away, and we're going to have to deal with it.

HARTMAN: What do you say to our critics -- the critics of the administration's policy right now in Central America?

ENDERS: Well, I think of them -- let's sustain the effort. It's an effort based basically on supporting democracy and reform. It has relatively little military content, and it

pushes toward an area-wide negotiation. Now the area-wide negotiation should be on getting all of the foreign advisers out, getting the heavy weapons out of the area, and committing all the governments to democratic systems.

HARTMAN: David Enders, Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs. Steve and I talked with him just a few minutes ago.